Center for Modern Greek Studies

Greek American Oral History Project

Transcription

Tape:

Subject: Demetrios Eugenios

Third Party:

Interviewer: Elana Vlahandreas

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Counter: 000

I: Ok, please state your name.

D: This is Demetrious Eugenios, father of Jillian Eugenios.

I: And when were you born?

D: I was born April 26, 1947 in Park Hospital in Mason City, Iowa.

I: Ok, umm and where were your parents born?

D: Well my mother was born in Mason City Park Hospital in Mason City, Iowa in the uhh late 20s and then her parents, my grandfather and his wife umm were born in Greece. One was born on Sera, {442} which is the island where my father was born uhh that was my grandfather Ted. And then my grandmother was born, I think she was born, I think she was born on Samos. And they got together and uhh in Greece in an arranged marriage and came to America in like the early 1900s.

I: Ohh ok.

D: About 1915 I think, 20.

I: How did you know, what did they do when they got here, what kind of work?

D: Umm they did the restaurant business, my, my grandmother didn't work outside the home.

I: Yeah.

D: She was very, you know, they were very traditional.

I: Uh huh.

D: And so my grandfather started dishwashing which is what all Greeks do when they come to America originally, or they did back then. And so he started dishwashing and very shortly thereafter he owned restaurants and started uhh building a business empire.

I: And so then, that's your great-, your grandfather.

D: My grandfather, Ted.

I: And then your dad was born//

D: //My dad was born in {006} the island 70 miles southeast of Athens.

I: Right, so they went back to Greece//

D: //No, my dad, my dad's wife and my mother//

I: //laughing, ok that's your mom's side.

D: We've been talking about my mom's side.

I: Right and then your dad's side.

D: Now my dad's side, his father died diving uhh for food in a, in a wreck that had happened in the ocean near {011} and so he was diving and he drowned when Marcos, my dad was only about 7 or 8 years old. So he died there.

I: Yeah.

D: And then my father was the only boy in the family so he became the man of the family and he had four sisters and his mother. So he took there of them essentially until he came to America//

I: //and did his mother remarry//

D: //and he, no his mother never remarried. And his sisters,I think there of his four sisters married, maybe they all married and then umm they were all older than he was but they all died before he did except for one who might still be alive, I'm not sure. She was alive the last time I saw her.

I: Ohh.

D: Of course.

I: Right.

D: Or I wouldn't have seen her.

I: <laughing> Yeah why did your dad come to the U.S.

D: My dad came to the U.S. to live uhh in about 1945, just after the war.

I: Right.

D: He had been to the U.S. though before that because he joined the American Merchant Marines during the war.

I: Yeah.

D: And so he was convoying work {025} back and forth during the war.

I: Right. So then how'd your parents meet, was it arranged?

D: They met in New York. You kmnow my mom was very protected and uhh unsophisticated and she was getting old for a Greek woman, about 19, 18, 19. So it was time for her to get married and start having kids.

I: Right.

D: So then her dad and you know facilitated her meeting this Greek guy that was off, jumped ship illegally who was my dad.

I: So how did they come from New York to California? What was the?

D: In a car, they just drove from New York to California. My dad was here illegally and he was just an illegal alien and came with them from Greece to Iowa where they went to and got whatever paperwork was necessary and made him legal.

I: Right.

D: And eventually he became a citizen but then he got married.

I: Right.

D: He probably got married with my mom so that he could stay in the United States.

I: Yeah.

D: I don't know.

I: And then he just started doing the uhh the post office.

D: No, no, no, no, no. He he he moved to Mason City, Iowa with of course with my mom and they lived there and they bought a couple pieces of property and uhh he started trying to do various businesses. He did an egg business. He would buy and sell eggs and I remember him driving a truck filled with egg cartons of eggs. Cuz he would go to the farmers, buying eggs form them and then he would resell them to like restaurants and all that.

I: Yeah.

D: So he was an egg merchant.

I: Uh huh <laughing>

D: And I remember sneaking up to his truck and pilfering eggs off the truck <laughing> and then throwing them at my friend.

I: <laughing>

D: But his egg business collapsed and he he lost all his money. I have a terrible memory of him crying, it was so sad when he, when he went out of business.

I: Yeah.

D: He was crying to my mother that he had just failed, he didn't have any money, couldn't support he family and the, a really horrible picture I remember a horrible time. So then he couldn't find work, he went to the slaughterhouse and he worked at Decker's which is a pig slaughtering house in Mason City.

I: Yeah.

D: He worked there for about maybe a little less than a year. Uhh maybe about a year maybe even two years I guess. And by that time I was about 4 years old, so that was about 1950.

I: Yeah.

D: And umm things weren't going well, times were tough back then. So he decided he would leave Mason City and come to California to make a fortune. So he came in 1950 to California and went to Los Angeles and got a job at General Motors making sugar whey {052}.

I: Ohhh.

D: So then when he saved up some money he called for my mom and now my sister and I and we came to California and he had saved up enough money to buy a little house on 3618 Candor Street in Lakewood which is in the pictures.

I: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

D: And uhh I remember the day we moved in in 1952.

I: So what was it like growing up in L.A. being Greek?

D: Well umm it was interesting. Actually growing up in Mason City was tough as being Greek because people would laugh at you and you know as you know I couldn't speak English uhh when I went to school. I went to kindergarten or I think it was 1st grade, I couldn't speak English at all, not a word of English.

I: Do you remember your first day when you were able?

D: I do, I went to school and umm my mom took me to school I remember. Uhh it was a pretty big building too cuz it was a not like a little one room school house I think it was a like a school for the whole city at that time. And so she took me and you know I was fussing and problem child anyway and so uhh eventually that day umm the teacher brought me home in the middle fo the school day because I was creating such a fuss. I couldn't understand English.

I: Yeah.

D: And so the next day my dad tok me into school and he just beat me while I was there and he said, "You will never come home from school again and you will learn English and you will do well and I don't wanna hear another word." I never came home again.

I: <laughing>

D: <laughing>

I: Ohh so what was it like learning English, to try to learn English?

D: Ehh you know I don't even remember it as a problem.

I: Yes.

D: I mean after my dad told me I would learn English <laughing> that was pretty bold <laughing> Actually there was no alternative I learned English by the time I was in umm first grade, by the end of first grade I was pretty much a straight A student.

I: Nice.

D: And remained a straight A student until I grew up and became dumb.

I: <laughing> So then uhh what was L.A. like when you, you.

D: Well then we moved to L.A. and uhh of course the neighborhood was all brand new and it was all the little tinty homes, you know, little 1,000 square foot homes. 3 bedroom, 1 bath homes. They were all identical, you know, pretty close and umm you know I had friends, kids moved in and stayed for 20 years, 15 years. As ong as we were there, we were there until about 60, 65, so we were there about 13, 14 years so when I was between ages, you know 4 and 16 or 17 we were 18, we were there. Uhh well more than that. Let's see we didn't move out of there til I was in my second year of college, so I was 19. So we lived there from '52 to '67.

I: And then why did you move, where did you go?

D: Well then umm you know my mom and dad had gotten a divorce in uhh in about '64, '63 something like that. So we continued living in the house, my dad was visiting us and all that. And then umm you know eventually my mom thought she should sell the house and not have responsibilities because she was dating and doin' other things. So she did and we moved into an apartment for a while and then uhh you know then I was in college, at that time I was in my second year of college at Long Beach State when she decided she needed a new start. She and my sister they needed a new start because if they got to a different location their life would be so much better.

I: Right.

D: Because it's the location, it's not them.

I: Right.

D: You know. So, so they just decided the bay area was the land of milk and honey. And so then we moved, we just, my mom moved and you know I didn't wanna, I was still in school and you know I didn't wanna live by myself really and so I moved with her, I came with 'em and we came up here, drove up here one night. I remember we got here on first street where there's a hamburger place which is still there and we stopped in this hamburger place to get you know six hamburgers for a dollar at that time.

I: <laughing>

D: It was a terrible part of town, it still is. And I said, “mom, this place is a dump.” And she’s like, “you know, it really is.” You know, so she said, I I think we should just leave and go back home.

I: <laughing>

D: Seriously. And I said no, no, no I told all my friends we’re coming up {102} I refused to just give up and be embarrassed like turn around and run home.

I: Right.

D: So I will not go home, if you go home I’m stayin, I’ll just get a job, you know. So ok fine, so they, Marina and her they decided to stay and make their new start. So we stayed and you know eventually we bought a few houses and uhh fixed em up and I completed my college at San Jose State.

I: Yeah.

D: In ’69.

I: So you grew up really traditional Greek home?

D: Pretty traditional, umm you know its sort of the typical uhh now that I look back on it it was you know a pretty typical sort of World War II, sort of lower middle class existence. Money was always a huge issue because we had none virtually, we were poor, really poor but I never realized that at the time I mean it never really, I always thought I would have money so not any money at that time was temporary and uhh you know I didn’t really see I mean I think money was never that much of an issue to me I always thought I’d have a lot I’d have a lot and I earn money when I needed it so big deal. Umm but you know my mom and dad had a, sort of a traditional husband wife relationship, you know and my mom would {116} go through all the time. Start feeling that she was being, you know, unfairly dominated and stifled and my dad thought that he was being suffocated and unappreciated and it ‘s basically what everybody thinks as their marriage collapses.

I: Right.

D: That’s, then their marriage collapses.

I: Yeah.

D: And then they get a divorce.

I: Yeah.

D: And that’s basically what happened. And umm you know there was, there was really constant conflict between my mom and dad because uhh they just, I don’t, I don’t think they had, they liked each other very much. And they had different ideas of how things should work and uhh you know my mom was very strong-willed and my dad in his own way was very strong-willed so it created a real tension.

I: Yeah.

D: But on the whole it was a, I found it was fine. I mean I did fine and enjoyed myself.

I: Right.

D: But Marina didn't, you know.

I: Yeah.

D: She was bitter and just like she is now.

I: Right.

D: Bitter and unhappy.

I: Yeah. <mumbling>

D: My sister mine had problems at school, lived with hippies, all that.

I: Yeah. So did you feel pressured to like meet Greek women when you were in high school and growing up or?

D: Yeah they wanted me to meet Greek women but I always thought they were, they stunk.

I: <laughing>

D: Somehow I'd, I'd go to the church be cause I was an altar boy, you know//

I: //Uh huh//

D: And they wanted me to become involved by being an altar boy.

I: Right.

D: And that lasted a really short time.

I: <laughing>

D: Because I remember I used to light the flowers on fire with the candlelight <laughing> so that pretty much {135} my altar boy period. But then, you know, they would introduce me to the girls as I got older.

I: Mmhmm.

D: And, and the girls you know Greek girls, I mean I'm sure that some Greek girls are really you know fine but most of them I found just are just filled with problems.

I: <laughing>

D: Seriously, they, they all seemed to have like sexual hangups.

I: Right.

D: They had uhh insecurity problems uhh I, I just found them very difficult to deal with and so I don't think I ever dated one. I may have dated one or two but just briefly.

I: Yeah.

D: So you know my parents realized early on he's not going to get involved with a Greek woman.

I: Yeah.

D: And uhh and I, and I//

I: //and then was your sister involved in with a, with a//

D: //my sister really wasn't ever involved with anybody because she couldn't get along with anyone.

I: Right.

D: And so she never had any boyfriends to speak of. I remember the first guy she had sex with though, he came to the house.

I: Mmhmm.

D: And uhh being at home she was, and she wasn't that old, about 16, 17 and uhh I mean it was the '50s at that time, you know {150} it was a real icky, awful situation. She was with him for you know a month or two, it was really, really disgusting, I mean really kinda feeling. And really that was the high point of her relationships with men or women as far as that's concerned.

I: Yeah.

D: Right there, I mean that was the best it ever got, you know, unfortunately for her.

I: Yeah.

D: And so really from that time until today it's gone downhill.

I: Yeah, that sucks <laughing>

D: Yeah it really does. Yeah I feel bad for her but she's really umm you know, really very hateful person.

I: Mmhmm. Mmhmm. So, so you mentioned your education.

D: Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

I: So you left and went to UC Davis.

D: Well I graduated from San Jose State.

I: Right.

D: And actually I was, as I wrote to you in an email just not so long ago I was still in school at UC, at San jose State the summer that I was supposed to be goin' to Law school in September.

I: Ohh.

D: Because I was tryin' to cram in the last few units.

I: Yeah, yeah.

D: So cuz I was in, had a few classes that I still needed and they weren't available.

I: yeah.

D: And the whole evil college thing.

I: Yeah. Yeah.

D: And so I was really going to school full time, you know, in 1969, in the summer of '69.

I: Yeah.

D: Trying to get units sufficient to graduate and fortunately you know it turned out that I graduated, I mean I got the units in the second summer school session.

I: Oh.

D: So I went to both sessions full time and in August I got the number of units I needed.

I: Yeah.

D: So then I just basically need classes, two days in August, I graduated from college.

I: Yeah.

D: Drove up to Davis, started law school.

I: <laughing>

D: Like the first week of September.

I: Wow so you had no gap in between 'em.

D: No there was no gap, there was a weekend gap. And, and I had set up, you know they anticipated I would do that.

I: Yeah.

D: So I mean I did have a, I had an on campus uhh, no it was off campus but it was a umm one of these big apartment buildings.

I: Yeah.

D: Where all the kids lived. And you had a scattering of graduate student, undergraduates, they all live in the same facility.

I: Yeah.

D: And there's a big cafeteria, there's no kitchens in your units.

I: Mmhmm.

D: But there's a big cafeteria where you, you know, you eat and {176} and then there are five bedrooms, four bedrooms, three bedrooms, three bedrooms in each unit. A single bedroom and then two bedrooms with two people each.

I: Ohh ok.

D: And so I had one of the, I had to share because I didn't have any money. So I shared with some Turkish guy.

I: Ok.

D: Hussain.

I: Really?

D: He was disgusting.

I: Oh why?

D: He stunk so bad that he had gas.

I: <laughing>

D: There used to be blue clouds of gas wafting through our room.

I: <laughing> nice

D: Plus he left like an inch of hair in the shower and he never cleaned it. The guy never cleaned a, he was a nice guy but you could tell he came from a third world environment.

I: <laughing> Right, ok.

D: And he came from a very rich family and went back, you know, after college.

I: Right.

D: He was graduating in agriculture and they owned big farms and combines and all that in Turkey.

I: Oh wow.

D: The south of Turkey.

I: That's cool.

D: Yeah, yeah.

I: So what did you graduate with from San Jose State, like a//

D: I, I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Social Science with an Art History minor because that was the only major available in which you never had to write a term paper.

I: Ohh.

D: And there were no language requirements.

I: And no math.

D: And no math.

I: <laughing> Nice.

D: It was made for me. And I could cram for every exam and there was no lab ever so I never took a lab, never did a term paper and never took a language class and never took a math class.

I: Nice.

D: It was a perfect college environment.

I: <laughing> So where was your dad when you were going to San Jose and then going to Davis?

D: Well let's see. My dad uhh had been in the post office and was in the post office, finally retired in about 1970, early '70s, about when I was getting out of law school he was retiring from the post office.

I: From, down in L.A.

D: Down in L.A. He had worked there about 15 years or so, so he retired and then he umm he decided to just leave the United States and live in Greece.

I: Mmm.

D: So he left, he left in the early '70s and basically he would come back every couple of years and say hi for three or four days//

I: //yeah//

D: //and then that's it. So I really, I hardly ever saw him. I he wrote to me you know periodically and once in a while he sent a few dollars and that's about it.

I: Uh huh. Alright well let's talk about your Greekness.

D: Yeah let's talk about it.

I: Ok, what leads you to consider yourself to be of Greek heritage?

D: Well both of my parents were born of Greek parentage so therefore <laughing> it's very likely that genetically I am Greek.

I: What do you think is important about the ancient heritage of Greeks?

D: Well I mean I think it's true that you know a lot of our modern civilization is really built on the ideas that were developed in early Greek history so democracy and voting and politics and many of those things were all developed by Greek culture, ancient Greek culture, you know. And a lot of our thinking is still defined by Greek culture. And umm so in a sense I mean I really feel that I'm just the, I'm just the successor in interest to Socrates and Aristotle, really.

I: <laughing>

D: And, and really they're probably in my genes, my you know makeup, there's some of them in me.

I: Mmhmm.

D: For sure.

I: Yeah.

D: And umm there's some of that in my kids.

I: Mmhmm. What Greek-related customs and values do you think are important to preserve?

D: Well I think that I nthink umm you know the sort of the Greek thinking of logic and thought, you know, sort of detached thought uhh is is something worth preserved. And I think the idea of umm democracy uhh in sort of a representative type government as opposed to totalitarianism in question is something worth preserving and I think those things came from Greece and are worth keeping. So those things are important you know and I think, I think there's a strong sense of family in Greek culture but unfortunately, you know, it's not western it's more middle eastern.

I: Right.

D: And umm, and so even though there's a strong sense of family umm you know it's not something that I'd really want to continue because I just don't like it. I think it's too oppressive, it's too

oppressive for the women and just by virtue of the fact that it's too oppressive for women it becomes too oppressive for the man because even if you have a slave you are enslaved as a slaveholder//

I: //right//

D: //as much as the slave is the slave, almost.

I: Mmhmm.

D: Sort of in a different way. So if you oppress your wife, you yourself are oppressed too. And really that's, it's sort of mutual oppression in a lot of these Greek houses.

I: Right.

D: So I can't agree with that but I do agree with you know they have strong family ties so that's worth keeping.

I: So because of you of the oppression you feel exists from the traditional Greek community//

D: //yeah//

I: //you chose not to bring your kids up in a traditional Greek family.

D: I tried not to but you know I was probably too loose. I could have been more oppressive and probably the kids would have been better off.

I: <laughing>

D: So I'm not sure.

I: <laughing> Your kids are really good, really good. <laughing>

D: I should have been a little bit more corporal punishment.

I: <laughing>

D: Probably didn't hit 'em enough.

I: Alright, that's good. Ok, let's just talk about assimilation.

D: Assimilation?

I: Yeah. Describe your feelings of identity as an American.

D: Yeah, umm I always thought I was an American even growing up when I couldn't speak Eng-, English I always thought I was an American and I still think I'm an American and not a, not a Greek in the nationality sense. And umm so it it never occurred to me that I would be anything other than American and then even now I always loved America you know and I still love America, it's the. You know when you compare it like to Greece for example, I mean it's just infinitely better here.

I: Yeah.

D: In spite of everything that is going on.

I: Mmhmm.

D: And the attempts to make it less nice.

I: Yeah.

D: It still is a wonderful place. And so umm and I, and I never, I mean I got a lot of statis growing up because I was growing up and I had a funny name, you know.

I: Right.

D: And I everyone made fun of my name all the time.

I: And you said your mom changed it.

D: Well my first name but I sent it Eugenios, you know, Eugenios the penis and all that//

I: //<laughing> I never got that one.

D: I did, oh man they called me everything! Uhh//

I: //oh my god!

D: Yeah, and so umm I, I never found it that significant//

I: //yeah//

D: //you know I just figured they're idiots and so why should I worry about 'em because they're idiots.

I: Mmhmm.

D: So I never, iut never really became an issue for me. Yeah, I just figured if I had an even playing field I would take care of things. And umm//

I: //and, and your mom called you Jimmy right because that's what everyone called you//

D: //Jim.

I: Jim.

D: Yeah, {275} Jim because I came home, you know, crying from school//

I: //right//

D: //because they were laughing at my name Demetrious.

I: Yeah.

D: And she said well ok when you go back to school tomorrow just say your name is Jim. So I did ok.

I: So you were Jim until//

D: //So I was Jim until I went to Law School.

I: Ohh.

D: Actually I was Jim until I met your mother.

I: Yeah.

D: And then she said well your name isn't Jim.

I: And I said no it really isn't, it's Demetrious.

D: She's was like oh I like that better, I'll just call you Demetrious from now on.

I: <laughing>

D: I said well ok. So then she just started calling me Demetrious then pretty soon everyone who met us heard my name was Demetrious they started calling me Demetrious.

I: Yeah.

D: There are still lawyers in the county that call me Jim.

I: <laughing>

D: I see them in court they say hi Jim how you doin? Come on by.

I: <laughing> Oh that's funny, oh let's see have you ever felt that you discriminated against, oh wait we talked about that//

D: //oh all the time.

I: Yeah.

D: As a matter of fact when I went to Law School I went into the aid office and said I'm a, I'm a disadvantaged minority you should just give me money, give me a grant and they said well wait a minute, how, how can you be a disadvantaged minority? I said well listen I'm Greek on both sides, my parents were illegal immigrants//

I: //Yeah//

D: //and uhh they had no money and I have no money and I couldn't even speak English when I was a kid.

I: Yeah.

D: So don't I qualify, you know, some kind of free grant?

I: <laughing>

D: So, so they said, they didn't think I was serious. So I said yeah I'm serious, I'll fill out the forms, I'm a minority student.

I: Yeah.

D: So they didn't know what to do so they filled out the forms and said ok we'll give you a grant.

I: Nice.

D: And I said no I don't want it, I'm not gonna take it, I just wanted to make you do it.

I: <laughing>

D: So I didn't take the grant, I just borrowed money.

I: Ohh. So you borrowed money off your law school?

D: Yeah, and then I paid it back. But I got into law school I thibnk you know on my applications I put minority student and I really think that's the reason I got into Davis. And everyone thought I was a Mexican.

I: <laughing>

D: Cuz when I went to Law School on the first day they had me like go to La Raza.

I: Oh yeah.

D: Go to La Raza, you go to La Raza, they tell me. I don't go to the la raza, why am I gonna go to la raza. Well you're in the Mexican entries, you know, under the students {304}.

I: <laughing>

D: Now I'm not going to la raza <laughing> but they honestly they thought I was a Mexican student and I think I got in because I was a minority student but I'm not sure, I don't know.

I: Which other schools did you apply to?

D: Oh I applied to like 8 of 'em. And I ended up getting accepted into all.

I: Oh and then why did you choose Davis?

D: I don't know. It's interesting, I don't really know. I got into McGeorge, I got into Hastings, I got into Loyola about 7 or 8 here in California. Well I got into Iowa too, I applied to Iowa just in case, it's where Ted went. So I got in there too.

I: Yeah.

D: And then finally I, I drove to some of them, I didn't go to Loyola but I did go to Mc, McGeorge, Hastings, I don't think I got into Santa Clara, I applied to Santa Clara too, but I couldn't afford it anyway.

I: Did you apply to Berkeley?

D: Umm no, there was no way I was gonna get into Berkeley, even as a minority student I wouldn't get in there.

I: Yeah.

D: Cuz that's really tough.

I: Yeah.

D: It's like getting into Stanford.

I: Mmhmm.

D: I didn't apply to Stanford, I mean those things are just out of the question.

I: Right.

D: With my grades and my LSAT score forget it. I had to be a minority student but only at sub universities.

I: Yeah.

D: So umm I just picked Davis cuz I think it was cheap so the other schools like McGeorge and Loyola and some of the others were private and they were very expensive.

I: Yeah.

D: So that was gonna be my last choice. And then Iowa wasn't that expensive but it was a long way.

I: In Iowa?

D: In Iowa.

I: Yeah.

D: So I didn't really wanna go there and uhh although I would have if that was the only one I was accepted into. But then Davis kinda just by, you know, elimination ended up being the place to go. Plus they had, you know, it was turned out to be fun so. It turned out to be a good choice.

I: Umm this is kind of off the subject but going back again <laughing> do you feel your Greek heritage has distinguished you in some way in your social interaction with people of other backgrounds?

D: Well I don't know, sure, it still does. Anytime you say you're Greek you know everyone goes oh you're Greece, come from Greece, blah blah blah, do you speak Greek? Umm you know because umm you know most people through their school years umm read a lot about Greece and it's contribution to western civilization and a lot of people have interactions with Greek along the way, you know, so like some Greek family owns a restaurant, they own. And and really umm most people have a good experience with Greeks and so it, it in some respects it helps that you're part of a group that everyone doesn't think you're a lowlife, you know. Like if you're a, you know, I mean some groups you know are troublemakers and aren't very successful, sort of losers.

I: Mmhmm.

D: Well those people, you know, if you're one of those in that group, well your interaction with society is bad automatically and then other, other groups are even better than yours. You know so it's your uhh student in you saying my parents are Japanese you automatically think well this guy's really smart he's gonna do great in school.

I: Uh huh.

D: Well it, he may not but they just have a good reputation in certain areas.

I: Right.

D: Well Greeks have a cetain entrepreneurial reputation uhh and that's good, I mean that helps uhh it helps in this business.

I: Yeah.

D: So I think it it uhh on the whole it's been very helpful to be Greek.

I: Uh huh. So umm you've been back to Greece?

D: Yeah, many times. Well not many but I'd say I've been there three, four times.

I: So what was it like going back?

D: It feels al ittle bit like returning home, you know. I mean it's uhh interesting everyone's speaking Greek, you know, and that's kind of odd but I enjoyed listening to it. And I enjoyed the music and I enjoyed the food. I actually enjoyed the climate.

I: Yeah.

D: It's a little warm but it's nice. And I enjoyed the historical buildings, ruins. I like MEditerranea, I like the islands.

I: Can you speak Greek fluently or?

D: Yeah I speak Greek fairly fluently but I don't read it and write it anymore cuz I got kicked out of school, Greek school.

I: Why?

D: Cuz I was a troublemaker.

I: <laughing> Well how old were you when you got kicked out?

D: I was about 10 or 12.

I: Did you sister stay in Greek school?

D: No, we got kicked out together//

I: //Ohh//

D: //cuz we were both troublemakers.

I: <laughing> What did your parents do? When you got kicked out?

D: Nothing, they were upset and they said well then you just won't learn Greek and we said that's right so we didn't.

I: <laughing>

D: I guess we showed them.

I: <laughing>

D: Now we can't read or write Greek.

I: <laughing>

D: Which is dumb really, I mean if you can't do both.

I: Let's see umm so maybe we should go talk about you meeting mom and your life.

D: Sure.

I: So you guys met in law school.

D: Left law school in uh '72 and uhh in June of '72 started studying for the BAR. Actually her law school was a late graduating law school so we were desperate because, because the BAR exam you

know is late, the last few days of August and umm you know we were still in school in June so it was just a desperate situation because we had to class, you know, our finals.

I: Yeah.

D: And then do the bar exam, the prep for the bar. And it takes a minimum of 6-8 weeks to get ready for the test.

I: Yeah.

D: And so we just had, I think we had about 7 weeks between our last class and taking the bar. So that was the really, I remember that as being a very desperate situation.

I: Yeah.

D: And I uhh, I wouldn't, I even told my girlfriend I couldn't see her anymore {398} at that time. And umm I just secluded myself in my apartment and went to the classes and went to my apartment, never did anything else for 7 weeks. Night and day. But I mean it's really the first time I had ever really studied in school. I actually, I actually tried hard <laughing> to learn the material cuz I was desperate//

I: //yeah//

D: //I hadn't done anything in three years of law school. So I was kinda crammin' it all in at the end. And uhh yeah it was pretty exciting and everyone had study groups and all that which I don't ever agree with because they usually are just a pain in the butt so I didn't go to any of the study groups. I just went to the class, home, class, home, class home for seven weeks, night and day.

I: Wow. So you passed the bar.

D: Well, yeah, I found out in December that I had passed the bar.

I: Congrats.

D: Yeah well it happens.

I: <laughing>

D: And umm yeah and while I'd been waiting for the bar I went and sold cars, well first I got a job at a law office, waiting for the bar results, so I was like a law clerk.

I: Right.

D: So I lasted two weeks before I got fired.

I: Why, why did you get fired?

D: Because I was incompetent, so they fired me and uhh so then I said well fine then I'll go back and sell cars. So then I went and got a job selling Dodsons on El Camino.

I: Nice.

D: {426} Dodson. Number 1 in the nation. Three years in a row.

I: And I sold Dodsons for quite some time actually cuz then I got the BAR results in December and umm you know I didn't know what to do because I was making all this money selling cars so then finally I, I got hooked up with some office that needed an extra lawyer to pay rent.

I: Yeah.

D: So I rented the space and started practicing law part time and selling cars full time. I did that for about four or five months and then I started getting too busy in the law practice so I just quit selling cars. That was {438} and that's from '73 to today I've been sitting here doin' that.

I: <laughing> And when did you meet mom?

D: I met her in '74 and I had been doing divorces for her family members who all of his sisters were getting divorced, married, divorced, married, they were really a good source of {445} so, so one of her sisters so that I already done two divorces by that time for April told me to come to her sister's birthday party who had never been married. And I was like this is intriguing one of your sisters actually hasn't been married twice.

I: <laughing>

D: And of course that was your mother.

I: Yeah.

D: So I went to the party, met your mom, umm and when I decided to start dating her more exclusively, I mean exclusively uhh and stop dating this other girl that I had been dating in law school, law school.

I: What's her name?

D: Bonnie.

I: What was she like?

D: She was umm, she was a very interesting woman. She was really bright, she's probably one of the smartest girl I've ever met really and uhh she was smart, real athletic and uhh her dad was a lawyer.

I: Was she in law school?

D: No, she was an undergrad in microbiology. Seriously, really bright, I mean she was really bright and uhh so she ended up incidently, I mean she ended up graduating and then she went to USF and became a, went through the Pharmacy school.

I: Ohh.

D: Well then she went to Med School and she became an Anesthesiologist.

I: Whoa.

D: Yeah. So she's a, she's an anesthesiologist, that's what happened to her. But she was a, my main memory of her, I mean among others but one of the funny memories of her is her running around left end in a football game that I went to watch because they used to have powderpuff football.

I: OH yeah.

D: which is kind of interesting at Davis for the old, you know, for the college girl. ;

I: Yeah.

D: And uhh she lived in the unit that I had lived in and one of the girls, the quarterback, was this really husky big girl who really had a crush on me, she was an undergrad. So she invited me to come to the game and Bonnie was the quite the half back, she was so fast.

I: Yeah.

D: And I remember coming to the game to watch this, you know, this quarterback, who I had no feelings for I mean she was just a friend and she did my laundry.

I: <laughing>

D: I felt obligated to come. I forget her name but anyway she just ended up being really mad at me, you know, cuz I didn't {491} so my I remember one of the games one evening it was late in the afternoon and uhh I was watching a game and so she hands off to Bonnie and Bonnie scoots runnin' left end so fast uhh whoa, it looked like a professional football player. Seriously and she was only like maybe 5'5 maybe 100 pounds and I mean she just was unbelievably good at football. <laughing> that's when I first met her but I mean we didn't date or anything but I mean I met her and all that. That was in our first year of, my first year of law school.

I: Mmhmm.

D: And then I, you know I just associated with her and all the other people for the next couple years.

I: Yeah.

D: And uhh it was only in my, beginning of my third year that I met her, I mean that we got like involved as boyfriend and girlfriend. So anyway that was her, she was, she was sweet,she had a brother. He's a, he became a doctor.

I: Yeah.

D: And uhh her mother was a nut. Her dad was a typical triple A insurance lawyer which <laughing> but they did well, they lived up in San Carlos in the hills and uhh real well off. So anyway that was that. So I decided to just date your mom and not date uhh Bonnie any longer.

TAPE CUTS OFF. END OF SIDE A {518}

SIDE B COUNTER: 000

D: in January up at Lake Tahoe. The only person that came to the wedding was my dad who was visiting {000} from Greece//

I: //Uh huh and your mom.

D: Nah, she wouldn't come.

I: She woul//

D: //by that time she was mad at Willow and she didn't get along.

I: Why, was there like a big fight or?

D: Mmm yeah. There was, there was just a big fight because they were. You know my mom always undermined my relationships with women and so and I had always allowed it actually so it was my fault too. But you know I finally, when she undermined, actually she undermined my relationship with Bonnie a lot and finally I felt well wait a minute you're going to undermine all my relations with all girls and so you know that's not good and so then I just decided forget it, I'm just not gonna let you undermine my relationships any more.

I: Yeah.

D: And so when I did that she had this horrible blowout with Willow and I said Willow and that was it. They were at odds really from that time forward.

I: Yeah.

D: And the same with my sister, she was another one. {009} you know both sort of my sister and my mother both thought of me as their man in their lives.

I: Right.

D: And they never figured out I'm not the man in their lives//

I: //Noo//

D: //They need to find their own man.

I: right.

D: Cuz I'm not interested.

I: Yeah.

D: And so they were real jealous of me, you know, having women and all that. I mean it was like, it was like they were dating me, it was weird. It was really weird, it was sick.

I: Yeah.

D: They, they're really sick.

I: Yeah.

D: And so anyway so they had a big battle, both of them had a battle with Willow because they both had a battle with Bonnie and before Bonnie it was so and so and so. They had always had a battle with every girl I had ever met. And so it just turned out that I just got fed up and Willow was the first one that got fed up with, you know, with them//

I: //yeah//

D: //when she was present and when they {016} we stayed together.

I: Yeah.

D: So kinda weird.

I: Yeah. So your, your dad <coughs> excuse me, you dad liked my mom, liked mom?

D: No, he didn't//

I: //he didn't//

D: //no but he was it didn't matter//

I: //yeah.

D: But he told you know he came to the wedding, he came to the house, and you know he accepted the fact that you know I picked her. I mean I got married to her and I had kids with her. I mean he didn't think that was a good choice.

I: Yeah.

D: And he told me that at the beginning, you know, that's this is a bad choice, you're making a bad choice. And I said well ok. But he said but it's your choice and you know whatever you do is your life and I'll support you know your family no matter what.

I: Yeah.

D: So I mean he had the right attitude, that was the right attitude.

I: Yeah.

D: And umm uhh so he always did I mean he never had anything bad to say after that, at the beginning when he told me you know you're making a bad mistake uhh he never actually said anything bad about Willow again ever, never did.

I: Why did he think you were making a bad choice?

D: Well because he thought that her family was weird.

I: Yeah.

D: And umm and that you know umm you you are what your family is//

I: Right.

D: Very, very much and that's really true.

I: Yeah.

D: And he met her mother and you know and he saw that there were some serious problems and umm you know and he had met Bonnie of course and he knew you know what her family was like and what she was on the way to doing and she seemed pretty you know together//

I: //Right//

D: //I guess would be the way you'd say it and she had already you know bought her own car, had a brand new car and it had you know everything. I mean she was pretty, even though she was 4 years younger than me she was still you know pretty aggressive and very astute. And so, you know, he saw that I was not going with that, I was going with Willow and then Willow's family was just a, a catastrophe.

I: Yeah.

D: And so he thought that was not a good strategy. And well you know I, I think he was wrong.

I: Yeah.

D: Cuz then I wouldn't have had you and wouldn't have had Marcos and I wouldn't had Zoe. I would have had other kids.

I: Yeah.

D: well that wouldn't be good, I would not change that for the world.

I: <laughing>

D: So he was definitely wrong.

I: Yeah.

D: Yeah he was clearly wrong about his, I made the right choice in the long run.

I: Yeah.

D: Ok.

I: <laughing> you came back a few more times from Greece and then he//

D: //he came back many times over the years and umm and then you know he got ill in the late '80s, early '90s and I went and got him a couple of times. Once with Marcos, once by myself. Umm yeah and then he just got more ill as the, as the '90s went along, he got progressively more ill and then he died I guess in '98, '90, yeah in the beginning of '98 he died. Yeah. Weird almost on his birthday.

I: Yeah. So you and mom never went to Greece together?

D: No we never did actually she had gone but not before, way before me. And then I had gone uhh with my dad for the first time in 1970. So I went with my dad and my sister, there's a nightmare for ya.

I: <laughing>

D: {052} with my sister.

I: Well alright.

D: God. It's just terrible travelin' with her, it just is. Cuz we went to uhh I remember we went to Egypt and she, you know, she, she was wanting to take things from people and carry them off the airplane and all that you know, all that's, oh you know you wanna do that in Egypt.

I: <laughing>

D: You bring some drugs in or something and you know you just couldn't, couldn't reason with her.

I: Yeah.

D: And then you know she would like flirt with the camel drivers and you know you don't want to flirt with the camel drivers//

I: //right//

D: //in the middle of the desert because God knows what will happen. It just drove me crazy, really I just {058} time when you're with someone like that cuz they're just, they're just nuts.

I: Yeah.

D: So anyway so we went you know even though and flew around the Mediterranean for two weeks with her. Turkey, Egypt, Rome, Greece//

I: //awesome.

D: Crete.

I: Yeah.

D: Yeah. I flew around there with Marina.

I: <laughing>

D: //It wasn't too much fun but I got to see you know enough of it so yeah it was I mean it was ok. It would have been nice to be with somebody else but it was ok and then we went to Greece, back to Greece and picked up my dad and came home. So that was my really my first trip. Then I went a couple more times, that's it.

I: Yeah.

D: And we hadn't spent that many days in Greece and I really if I had had money I would, I wouldn't mind buyin a place in Greece and goin you know one month a year to Greece,s it on the beach, you know there are a couple nice islands {068} but other islands that I would like to uhh, to be on.

I: You don't like {068}?

D: I like {069} but I I would like something alittle bit more cosmopolitan.

I: Oh yeah.

D: Cuz there's like the island that's just about, about 15 miles out in the ocean from Athens and you take the hydrofoil to get there. I can't remember the name of the island and it is just fantastic and it's, you have a nice city and it's about a 40 minute, 30 minute hydroplane ride to Greek, to Athens.

I: Ohh yeah I remember that one.

D: Yeah, oh it's cool. Really nice. So I'd go there.

I: Yeah.

D: Buy a nice spot you know there on the hills and spend a month of a year there. That'd be cool.

I: <laughing>

D: Yeah, that'd be a great spot. And then, and then from there you can go, you know, take the boat to Rome, take the boat to Crete, take the boat it just, you know I mean every year you could go there for a month or two.

I: Yeah.

D: That'd be cool, if you had money.

I: Yeah.

D: You just need a, you don't need that much but you do need some.

I: Yeah.

D: So, maybe you could do it.

I: I'll do it.

D: I hope you do it.

I: You can come visit.

D: Oh {080}

I: Alright well thank you for allowing me to interview you today.

D: Well thank you for being my daughter.

I: <laughing> Alright.

Counter: 080

END OF SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW